CommonWealth

Historical Undercurrents

I see the writing on the walls,
They call it hallucinations,
I call it pattern recognition.

Mental illnesses caused by Capitalism

Today's temporary breakdown
Once again revolves around existence.

I'm probably missing something,
But the only conclusion I come to
Is that there are three ways to live:

Sell your body,
Sell your mind,
Sell your soul.

The problem is,
I don't want to sell any part of me.

Spider’s Thread

The terror has been grinding
For generations,
It's the background static,
The eerie high pitch screech
That somehow only the young can hear.
Eventually your brain tunes it out.
Yet it still grinds,
Sanding your soul away,
Pulverizing bones,
Consuming flesh,
For a modicum of power.

I see the terror in flashes,
A leaked video,
Ink on a page,
An exposé on the horrors
Of our exalted systems,
Hushed stories told
Around a drunken table,
Where all I can do is grip their hand,
Continuing to drown ourselves,
Never brought up again
Until the next time we're inebriated.

I struggle with my complicity,
Yet every step I try to take,
It leads to more and more,
If I can even afford to make change.
So the terror settles
In my bone marrow,
Sticking to my veins,
Grinding the fabric of my mind,
Until I unravel into threads,
Waiting for the scissors to slice,
A sacrifice
For perpetual growth.

The more I learn about hope, the more I see despair in the world (2021)

It's a weird feeling,
Seeing democracy die at the hands of your parent's generation.
We yell and fight and get arrested and vote and struggle struggle struggle,
But even those like me who hold immense privilege,
Still see our family members falling into the constant despair of disrepair.
Our desires are quite mediocre compared to the dreams that I hold close.
Perhaps that's telling,
How desperate we are,
Fighting for the simple right to exist,
Peasants serving their feudal lord seem to me to have more happiness than we do.
I am restless.
I am not hungry, or in particular need of much.
Nevertheless I am restless.
I ache to participate in a revolution,
My mind knows I can not handle the pressure.
As I heal myself, the urge keeps growing.
Restless, wanting, dreaming,
I am not fighting for my hypothetical kids that will never exist.
I am choosing to fight for myself,
For the people still living,
For the lives stolen away.
I used to want to die. (Some days I still do)
How can I die and leave every soul that I love, will ever love, have ever loved, to sit in their clutching despair of this world?
If it's one thing I don't know how to do,
It's to know when to give up.
So I'll continue to be restless. I'll continue to struggle.
I'm patient. I'm young.
I can outlast.

Treading Water

These days are steeped in despair,
A never ending conveyor belt of the worst news you could imagine,
Only to be outdone 48 hours later.

These days are tinged with hope,
The more bitter every hour feels,
The more the world hungers for something to hold on to.

To be overwhelmed is their aim,
To be constantly striving is to burn yourself out,

Rest is revolution
Until they break down your door
And slaughter you in your sleep.

There are those who are shocked by this betrayal,
My throat is raw from screaming,
I spit venom into my "I told you so"'s,

The frustration won't abide this way,
But I can’t bring myself to play along,
Pretending to ignore every circumstance around me.

There’s a part of me that wishes
That I could be myself from 5 years ago,
Willing to burn, willing to destroy.

She had lost her reasons to live,
Ruminating *“might as well become a martyr”*
Thinking the world just needed a shock to see sense again.

I recognize that it is naive.
I recognize that it is delusion.
I recognize it as the lack of power that most of us grapple with.

Still I hope.

Perhaps a part of maturity is becoming

More of an optimist,

Willing to bear the responsibility
Of building a better world,

More satisfied with living than disappearing.

Othering

Those unwavering stares,
Filled with vitriolic hate and consuming fear,
Where have the curious and playful eyes from my childhood gone to?
When did this world change from baseline empathy,
To a perpetual motion machine of extremes?

It was 2008 when what was seen as hope finally manifested,

No, it had to have been earlier.

It was 2001 when tragedy sparked a war that lasted generations,

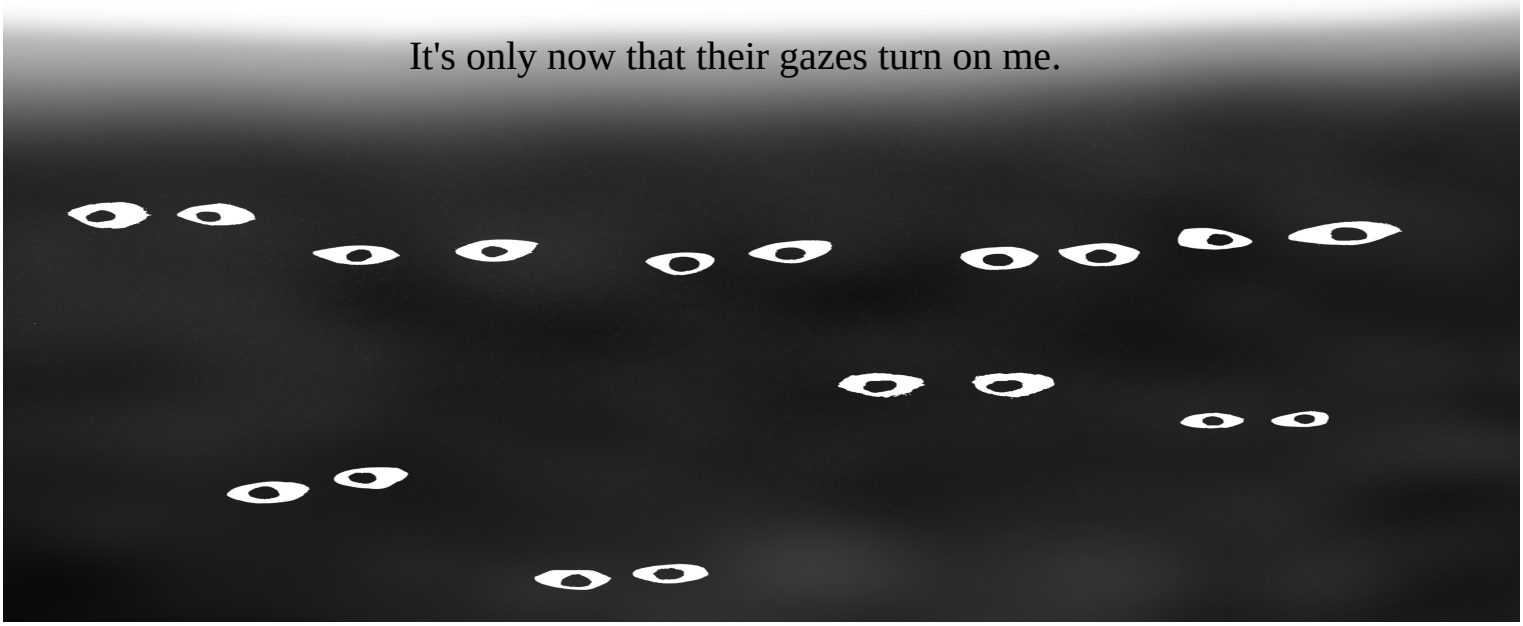
No, without the hate the war would not happen.

It was the media crazy 90s,
the drug fueled 80s,
the revolutionary 70s,
the counter counter-culture of the 60s,
the conspiracy filled 50s,
the war,
the depression,
the war,

It was
It was
It was.

It's always been here,
Hasn't it?

It's only now that their gazes turn on me.



The more I learn about despair, the more I see how to hope and dream (2024)

It's a weird feeling,
Seeing democracy die at the hands of your *younger peer's* ~~parent's~~ generation.
We yell and fight and get arrested and vote and struggle struggle struggle,
But even those like me who hold immense privilege,
Still see ~~our family members~~ *everyone* falling into the constant despair of disrepair.
Our desires are quite mediocre compared to the dreams that I hold close.
Perhaps that's telling,
How desperate we are,
Fighting for the simple right to exist,
Peasants serving their feudal lord seem to me to have more happiness than we do.
At least their lords understood that they had limits to their hubris.
I am restless.
I am angry.
I am not hungry, or in particular need of much.
At least for now.
Nevertheless I am restless.
I ~~ache to~~ *am already* participate*ing* in a revolution,
My mind knows I can ~~not~~ handle the pressure.
As I heal myself, the urge keeps growing.
Restless, wanting, dreaming,
I am not fighting for my hypothetical kids that will never exist.
I am choosing to fight for myself,
For him, and her, and them,
For the people still living,
For the lives stolen away.
I used to want to die. (~~Some~~ *Increasingly fewer* days I still do)
How can I die and leave every soul that I love, will ever love, have ever loved, to sit in their clutching despair of this world?
To die by my own hand at this point would be their ultimate goal,
Maniacal laughter of greed and pleasure,
It's unfortunate that my hobby happens to be defying expectations.
If it's one thing I don't know how to do,
It's to know when to give up.
So I'll continue to be restless. I'll continue to struggle.
I'm patient. I'm young.
I have seen enough.
I ~~can~~ *will* outlast.
If not, then may I disappear in service of the struggle,
And never tell me that I didn't warn you.

Revelations of the Revolution

Tell me,
***Which* crossed line does it need to be**
Before gathering protesters isn't enough?
***When* is the moment that direct action**
Becomes acceptable, necessary, the only escalation remaining?
***How* much can we temper our rage**
As more and more undeniable evidence is shared?
***Why* must we continue to break time and time again,**
Scraping by as a group smaller than my high school math class
Rent out cities for parties,
Throw entire annual budgets to useless endeavors,
Play war games with our lives,
Systematically driving us against one another,
Despite our overwhelming desire for connection and peace?

I am told ***"violence begets violence"***
Yet we are standing here soaking up bullets
Engraved with every inadequacy of our society,
Broken systems piled upon broken systems,
Name a solution and they will try to extinguish your existence.
What is considered self defense, self preservation, self sacrifice?
They'll brand us rebels for our desire to live,
Weaponize guilt and shame and fear,
High on perceived power,
They act like deities,
Doling out punishment as judgement,
Competing to see who can commit the most cruelty.

***Who* will tell our story,**
Of our victories and memorials,
Our ideas and hopes?
How every detail of the rising sun
Illuminates the flowers, the concrete, the momentary quiet of the mourning?
***Where* will I find myself?**
An observer to the chaos,
Hesitating to make the choice between safety and solidarity?
Or will I drink dreams and delusion?
Submit myself to the faith of liberation,
Pen to paper, boots to ground, flinging firebombs
Of poetry and prose,
Write the testimony of our tragedies,
Scatter our joy to the winds
Until the moon ushers our deliverance,
And the earth sings our hymns.

Rules of Engagement

Lesson number 1 of becoming a revolutionary:
Get so mad you start to plot and plan.

Lesson number 2 of becoming a revolutionary:
Calm down and think rationally.

Lesson number 3 of becoming a revolutionary:
Trust, but verify.

Lesson number 4 of becoming a revolutionary:
There is strength in numbers.

Lesson number 5 of becoming a revolutionary:
Language is powerful and important.

Lesson number 6 of becoming a revolutionary:
There are more roles to play beyond being on the front lines.

Lesson number 7 of becoming a revolutionary:
Delusion is a grandeur.

Lesson number 8 of becoming a revolutionary:
Delusion is *necessary.*

Lesson number 9 of becoming a revolutionary:
If you can't find joy, create it.

Lesson number 10 of becoming a revolutionary:
Liberation is the only result that you must accept.

Self Determination

It's something about complicity,
Swallowing down the bile,
The mind, body, heart, and soul
Screaming and pounding at the door.

Follow orders they say,
No questions, just actions,
Give up autonomy for stability,
Let the fear eat you alive.
And when accountability arrives,
You'll find yourself under bus wheels,
Thrown down cliffs,
Tied to a stone,
Frantically willing magic to exist,
Any sort of way you'll be tried as a witch.
The protection promised always ends being a grift.

It's the beatings we don't see
Until the harm has already sunk into the skin,

Regret the past ignorance,
Reclaim your own land,
Realize the consequences,
Rage for the world,
Relish the freedom you build.

These epiphanies are the roots
Wrapping around the brain stem,
Pushing through grey matter and bone,

The upheaval of the paradigm
Masquerades as agony
Until suddenly the surroundings blossom,

Vivid,

Stunning,

Marvelous